Capsule Summary

Inventory No. WA-II-1173

Keedysville Road and Historic Trace

Keedysville Road

Washington County, MD

Ca. 1731, 1830 (Hitt Bridge), 1833 (new road section and Pry's Mill Bridge); 1862

Access: Public

The Keedysville Road, one of the oldest roads in Washington County, was in use during the early settlement period of the 1730s. The narrow two-lane track was part of the historic road leading from Frederick, MD from the east to Williamsport, MD to the west. It connects to farther points from either end. The section of road documented here runs from MD Rt. 34 at the east where it meets the western edge of the Keedysville Historic District to MD. Rt. 65 to the west. Because other major routes have bypassed the Keedysville Road, it has not been substantially widened and retains its historic appearance. Early 19th century stone arch bridges carry the road over the Antietam creek as well as a tributary, the Little Antietam Creek. Several sections of historic stone wall border the winding road as it passes through historic farmsteads.

The Keedysville Road and Historic Trace is significant under National Register Criterion A for its contribution to the settlement of western Maryland and the development of transportation, agriculture and associated industry in the region. The road was one of the first roads established in western Maryland during the early settlement period. It was in use by at least 1731. The road has been modernized only to the extent that is slightly wider and topped with asphalt; the road has not been re-graded, nor does have shoulders, and therefore retains much of its historic "feel." It crosses two, single-lane stone arch bridges on its route through historic farmsteads. The section known as the Road to Conococheague or Braddock Road retains the road's early appearance. The Road to Conococheague, now part of Keedysville Road, led from Frederick

County to western Maryland, providing access to rich agricultural land and mill sites in the region. The road also adjoins the Antietam Battlefield; its location insuring its use as a major strategic thoroughfare and many homes and barns were used as hospitals after the battle on September 17, 1862. The Keedysville Road passes a number of historic farms exhibiting fine examples of stone wall construction and architecture from the late 18th century through 1900. The road continues today to provide access to the farms and dwellings along its route.

Inventory No. WA-II-1173

The Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

1. Name of	Property	(indicate prefer	red nan	ne)					
historic	Keedysville Road; B	raddock Road; Ro	oad to C	Conococ	heague				
other	Coffman Farms Road	d; Keedysville Roa	ad and I	Historic	Trace (prefe	rred)			
2. Location									
street and number	Keedysville Road						not for pub	lication	
city, town	Keedysville					X	vicinity		
county	Washington								
3. Owner of	Property	(gives names a	ind mail	ling add	resses of all	owners)			
name	Multiple owners								
street and number				7		telephone			
city, town				state	MD	zip code			
4. Location	of Legal Des	cription							
courthouse, registry	courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washin			ngton liber			folio		
city, town	Hagerstown	tax map		tax pa	rcel	tax II	O number		
5. Primary L	ocation of A	dditional E	Data	+					
Contribution Determined Record	ibuting Resource in Na ibuting Resource in Loc mined Eligible for the N mined Ineligible for the rded by HABS/HAER ric Structure Report or I :	cal Historic District National Register/N National Register	t Maryland /Maryla	and the same of th		al .			
6. Classifica	ation								
district building(s)	public a c c c c c d d e f g h h	nt Function griculture ommerce/trade defense omestic ducation unerary overnment dealth care	X	religio social transp work i unkno	ortation n progress own t/not in use	Resource Co Contributing 1 4 5 Number of Co previously list	Noncontrib	buildings sites structures objects Total	

7. Desc	ription		Inventory No.	WA-II-1173	
Condition					
	excellent	deteriorated			
X	good	Ruins			
(1/20	fair	altered			

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Description Summary:

The Keedysville Road, one of the oldest roads in Washington County, was in use during the early settlement period of the 1730s. The narrow two-lane track was part of the historic road leading from Frederick, MD from the east to Williamsport, MD to the west. It connects to farther points from either end. The section of road documented here runs from MD Rt. 34 at the east where it meets the western edge of the Keedysville Historic District to MD. Rt. 65 to the west. Because other major routes have bypassed the Keedysville Road, it has not been substantially widened and retains its historic appearance. Early 19th century stone arch bridges carry the road over the Antietam creek as well as a tributary, the Little Antietam Creek. Several sections of historic stone wall border the winding road as it passes through historic farmsteads.

Description

The Keedysville Road is a narrow, winding two-lane thoroughfare running southeast-northwest (hereinafter referred to as "east" and "west") across hilly terrain. The section described here leads from MD Rt. 34 at the western edge of the Keedysville Historic District to MD Rt. 65 about 3.2 miles to the west. For the most part the road has no gravel shoulder. It is bordered by farm fences and sections of historic stone wall. This length of road passes through early 19th century farms with no modern developments and only a few modern dwellings. The road today leaves Rt. 34 running west, crossing Little Antietam Creek via the Pry's Mill Bridge (WA-II-121), and follows the Little Antietam Creek's narrow wooded ravine. Then turning sharply north through the Hitt's Mill and Houses National Register Historic District (WA-II-120), it turns again sharply west to cross the Hitt Bridge (WA-II-122) over the Antietam Creek, then continues in a westerly direction rising through farm fields on higher hills with views over the valley. The modern state routes at either end of the Keedysville Road present a stark contrast to this historic road.

The original part of the road from Keedysville to the Hitt Bridge over the Antietam Creek, historically known as the Road to Conococheague or Braddock Road, follows Coffman Farms Road west from Rt. 34 for approximately ¼ mile. The road climbs a steep hill, passing between two modernized log houses, to a sharp right turn at the crest of the hill. The house on the right has been documented as WA-II-313 German-sided Log Cabin. The unsurveyed house on the left has a small frame barn located at the edge of the road. The modern Coffman Farms Road turns sharply north while the historic trace continues west as a gravel lane (WA-II-308, Braddock Road). A line of tall native cedars borders the south side, while the north is bound by a 3-foot high wall of native limestone. Deciduous hardwood trees have grown up randomly against the stone wall's north side along an open field. After about a quarter mile a modern driveway turns south while the deeply cut trace of the old road is visible straight west through the woods. Remnants of a stone wall are found on the north side of the old road. This section

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Name Keedysville Road and Historic Trace Continuation Sheet

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runs down the steep hill to intersect the main Keedysville Road east of the Hitt Bridge. This ¾-mile route was relocated in 1833 to the new section of road a few hundred yards to the south, the eastern-most section of Keedysville Road still used today.

The 1833 road curves downhill from MD Rt.34 and crosses Pry's Mill Bridge (WA-II-121) over the Little Antietam Creek. This two-arch limestone structure features central tapered piers and cut stone voussoirs. The side walls of the one-lane bridge are topped by a concrete ledge. The rocky creek runs to the south under high wooded cliffs, and the road hugs the north side of the ravine. The ruins of a stone lime kiln are located at the south edge of the road. Remnants of a stone wall to the north appear in short sections. Within a half mile the brick Pry's Mill (WA-II-120) is visible along the creek bank. A two-story log house stands on the left hand side of the road, and a two-story frame house is located on the right side.

Here the road turns sharply right, or north, where a bank barn on the left (historically part of the Hitt farm) has a barnyard partly enclosed by a well-laid stone wall. High on the hill to the right stands the two-story log Hitt-Cost House (WA-II-252) dating from the late 18th century. Just past this house the old Braddock Road is visible in the woods.

The Keedysville Road turns a sharp left, or west, to cross the circa 1830 Hitt Bridge (WA-II-122) over the Antietam Creek. This single-lane bridge is constructed with three segmental arches lined with cut voussoirs and supported by tapered piers. The top of the wall is covered by a concrete ledge which replaces the original coping.

On the west side of the creek the road turns north, and Mansfield Road diverges to the west. At this intersection a concrete culvert running under Mansfield Road accommodates a small stream which flows from the north and empties into the west side of the Antietam near the base of the Hitt Bridge. The Keedysville Road leads uphill along a ridge of land between the small creek ravine to the west and the Antietam Creek to the east. A two-story house, which appears to be of late 19th century frame construction, stands at the eastern edge of the road. Within a quarter mile a late 19th century farmstead appears between the east side of the road and the Antietam Creek. The substantial two-story brick house, which is set back from the road in a wooded setting, is currently under restoration. North of the house a timber frame bank barn stands on a stone foundation.

As the Keedysville Road climbs the steep terrain it twists to the northwest. Here a section of stone retaining wall buttresses the field on the north side. The Snyder-Thomas Farmstead (WA-II-255) stands at the southwest side of the road. This two-story house comprises a log section and an 1813 stone addition. Two frame buildings, a washhouse and a bank barn, are also located on the property.

The Keedysville Road turns more westerly as it crests the hill, providing a scenic vista across rolling farm fields along the Antietam watershed to the ridge of South Mountain about 12 miles to the east. The Hoffman-Scheller Farm (WA-II-251, NR) is located several hundred yards south of the road at the headwaters of the small creek that flows into the Antietam. The complex

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includes a mid-19th century two-story brick farmhouse, a small stone dwelling built over a spring, dating from circa 1810, a large frame bank barn, and other outbuildings.

The last mile of the Keedysville Road passes through the area known as Smoketown. University Road leads north to the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station. In the 1870's "School #3" stood at the northeast corner of this intersection. One-tenth mile farther west Smoketown Road leads south. After the Battle of Antietam the Smoketown field hospital was located at the southeast corner of this juncture, then part of the Hoffman farm (WA-II-251, NR). The C. H. Ebersole Farm (WA-II-358) straddles the Keedysville Road, barn on the left, brick farmhouse on the right, just west of Smoketown. A two-part log house, log smokehouse, and stone springhouse stood on the next farm, the Price Farm (WA-II-302), until their demolition in the 1980s. The stones forming the base of a stone wall appear along the north side of the road.

A distinctive cross-gabled frame farmhouse stands at the northeast corner of the Keedysville Road's intersection with busy MD Rt. 65, the Sharpsburg Pike. The Eakle-Poffenberger House (WA-II-325) is a stylish well-trimmed house was built in 1900. The farmstead includes and bank barn, carriage house/garage, and chicken house.

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and jus	tify below	
X 1600-1699 X 1700-1799 X 1800-1899 X 1900-1999 2000-	X agriculture archeology architecture art X commerce communications community planning conservation	economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage X exploration/ settlement	health/medicine X industry invention landscape architecture law literature maritime history X military	performing arts Philosophy politics/government Religion Science social history X Transportation other:
Specific dates	1731, 1833, 1862		Architect/Builder unknown	n
Construction da	tes c.1731, 1830 (Hitt Brid	ge), 1833 (new road se	ction and Pry's Mill Bridge)	
Evaluation for:				
Evaluation for:	National Register	Mai	yland Register X	not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Summary of Significance

The Keedysville Road and Historic Trace is significant under National Register Criterion A for its contribution to the settlement of western Maryland and the development of transportation, agriculture and associated industry in the region. The road was one of the first roads established in western Maryland during the early settlement period. It was in use by at least 1731. The road has been modernized only to the extent that is slightly wider and topped with asphalt; the road has not been re-graded, nor does have shoulders, and therefore retains much of its historic "feel." It crosses two, single-lane stone arch bridges on its route through historic farmsteads. The section known as the Road to Conococheague or Braddock Road retains the road's early appearance. The Road to Conococheague, now part of Keedysville Road, led from Frederick County to western Maryland, providing access to rich agricultural land and mill sites in the region. The road also adjoins the Antietam Battlefield; its location insuring its use as a major strategic thoroughfare and many homes and barns were used as hospitals after the battle on September 17, 1862. The Keedysville Road passes a number of historic farms exhibiting fine examples of stone wall construction and architecture from the late 18th century through 1900. The road continues today to provide access to the farms and dwellings along its route.

Resource History

The Keedysville Road was part of one of the earliest roads in the region, commonly known as the Road to Conococheague, leading from Frederick in the east through Crampton's Gap in South Mountain, then through the Hagerstown Valley (an extension of the Cumberland Valley and Shenandoah Valley) to present-day Williamsport and other crossing points along the Potomac River. The road was in use at least by 1731, and it probably developed from an old Indian trail. Being already in place in 1755, it is likely that General Braddock's expedition to

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Fort Duquesne would have traveled along this route west, widening and improving the track for the passage of wagons.

The Keedysville Road continued in use as a wagon road providing access to mills along its longer historic route, ¹ including Hess's Mill on the Little Antietam in what is now Keedysville (WA-II-1145). In 1815 a turnpike was built from Sharpsburg to Boonsboro, crossing the Keedysville Road near Hess's Mill. Keedysville grew up along this route. Although the new road superseded the old road in commercial use, the Keedysville Road also saw increased traffic due to the business in the expanded town.

The Hitt Bridge community developed during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The late-18th century Hitt-Cost House (WA-II-252) is depicted on Charles Varle's 1808 map under the ownership of Robert Smith. The Smith family purchased many tracts in the area beginning about 1750. Smith willed this property to his grand nephew Samuel M. Hitt in 1818. Varle's map does not show a mill in this area in 1808, and it is believed that Hitt established his mill (WA-II-120), near the old road track, after that time.

In 1829 the Washington County Commissioners authorized the construction of a three-arch stone bridge across the Antietam Creek near the Hitt mill.² This bridge was built by John Weaver, assisted by Silas Harry. In 1830 Hitt signed an agreement with the Justices of the Levy Court, stating that he would repair the road from the bridge to Keedysville. In an 1833 document, however, the road was relocated to pass Hitt's mill, describing the section of road that ran straight uphill from the bridge as "the old road." The new route (see attached plat) crossed the Little Antietam Creek and a stone bridge was built to span this creek shortly thereafter.

Hitt's industrial complex included the large gristmill still standing today and a sawmill (see historic photograph; the sawmill foundations are all that remain today) both powered by the Little Antietam Creek. A coopers shop was located on the opposite bank of the creek and a number of other shops were nearby the mill (all are foundation remains today). A pair of lime kilns were also constructed on the southern edge of the new road section (see modern photograph) providing remarkably convenient access to wagons unloading stone for burning in the kilns. For Samuel Hitt, and later mill complex owner Samuel Pry, the new road section was a boon to commerce and transportation.

Samuel and Philip Pry had purchased the mill property in 1847.³ Within fifteen years their bustling mill and farm complex and the other farms along the Keedysville Road became a center of devastating military activity. Keedysville Road runs near the northern edge of the Antietam Battlefield, scene of the bloodiest single day battle of the Civil War. The road served as a major route for troop movements before the battle as well as afterwards. On September 15th 1862, Union General Hooker's forces camped between Keedysville and the Hitt Bridge, which was thereafter referred to as "Hooker's Bridge." General Hooker and his men crossed the bridge the next afternoon. On September 16, 1862, the eve of the battle, General J.K.F.Mansfield dined at the former Hitt home, which had been sold to Samuel Cost in 1846.⁴

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After the September 17th battle, nearly every home and barn along the Keedysville Road was used as a hospital, including the Pry Mill, the Hitt-Cost House, The Hammond Farm west of the Hitt Bridge, Snyder-Thomas Farmstead (WA-II-255), and the Hoffman-Scheller Farm (WA-II-251), whose fields hosted the Smoketown field hospital for several months, one of the most successful in the Union Army.

Pry's Mill operated as a sawmill and gristmill until 1926. With the mill's demise, the Keedysville Road lost its importance as a commercial route. The road appears today as an old-fashioned, narrow, winding country road. This significant early "wagon road" has retained its historical appearance as other roads have become modernized.

Note: For Historical Context please refer to *A Transportation History of Mid-Maryland*, a Maryland Historical Trust grant funded context development project administered through The Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, 2002-2003.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. WA-II-1173

Hays, Helen Ashe, The Antietam and its Bridges, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1910.

Maryland Historical Trust, Washington County Historic Sites Survey, Crownsville, MD.

Moats, Margaret Burtner, A History of Keedysville to 1890, Boonsboro, MD: Mason Dixon Press, 1989.

Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Western Maryland, Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1882.

Schildt, John W., Drums Along the Antietam, Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1972.

Tracey, Arthur G., notes compiled on early roads of Washington Co., Historical Society of Carroll County, Westminster, MD.

Williams, T.J.C., History of Washington County, Maryland, Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1968.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property

Approximately 3.2 miles

Acreage of historical setting

N/A

Quadrangle name

Keedysville & Funkstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Keedysville Road and Historic Trace includes the section of road bounded on the east by Maryland Route 34 and on the west by Maryland Route 65. A small section of Coffman Farms Road, beginning on the east at Maryland Route 34 and continuing west along a gravel lane and overgrown road trace until it joins Keedysville Road just east of the Hitt Bridge, is also included within the boundary. The section is approximately 3.2 miles in length and includes only the road itself, paved edge to paved edge, the two stone bridge structures, and the historic road trace (as indicated on the attached USGS map).

This section of the Keedysville Road was chosen for its integrity to the historic appearance of the road and contributing bridge structures as well as the location of the historic trace, which illustrates the evolving nature of transportation-related resources. The beginning and ending points were chosen because of their clear interruption of the historic resource producing a finite road section.

11. Form Prepared by

Paula S. Reed, PhD., Architectural Historian; Edie Wallace, Historian; Merry Stinson, Architectural Historian name/title Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc. organization March, 2003 date street & number 105 N. Potomac Street telephone 301-739-2070 city or town Hagerstown state Maryland

> The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

> The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust

DHCD/DHCP

100 Community Place

Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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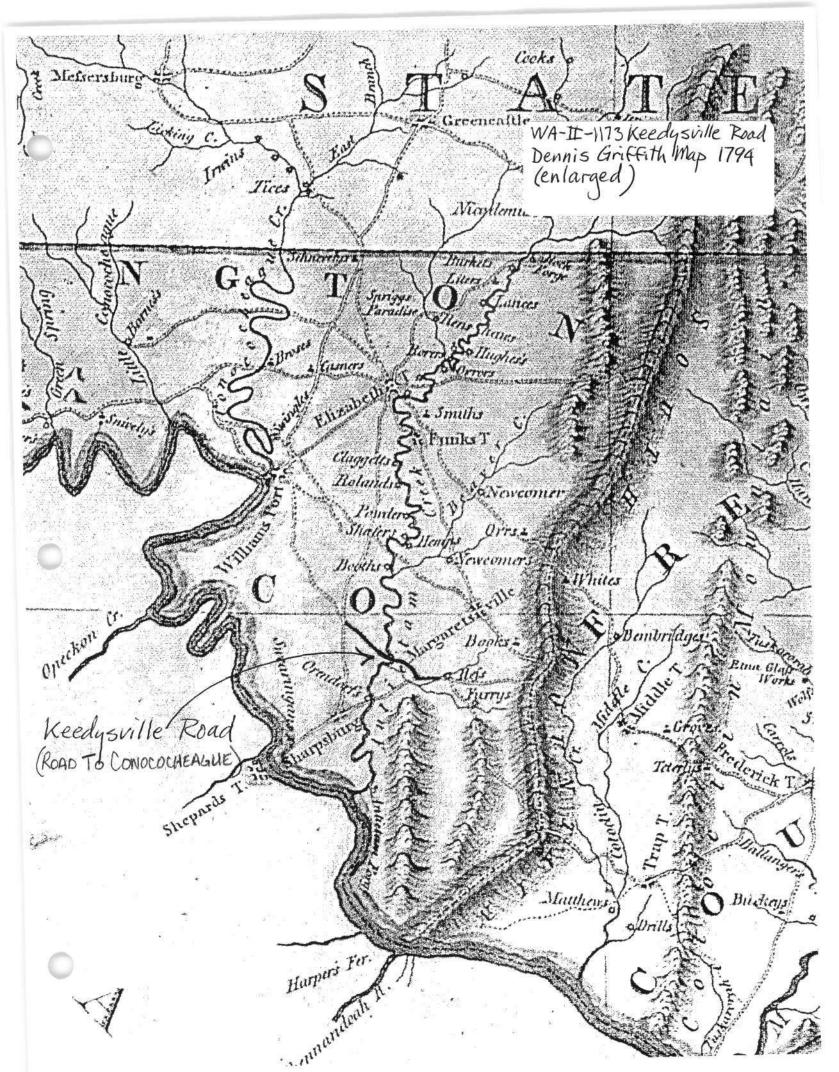
Endnotes

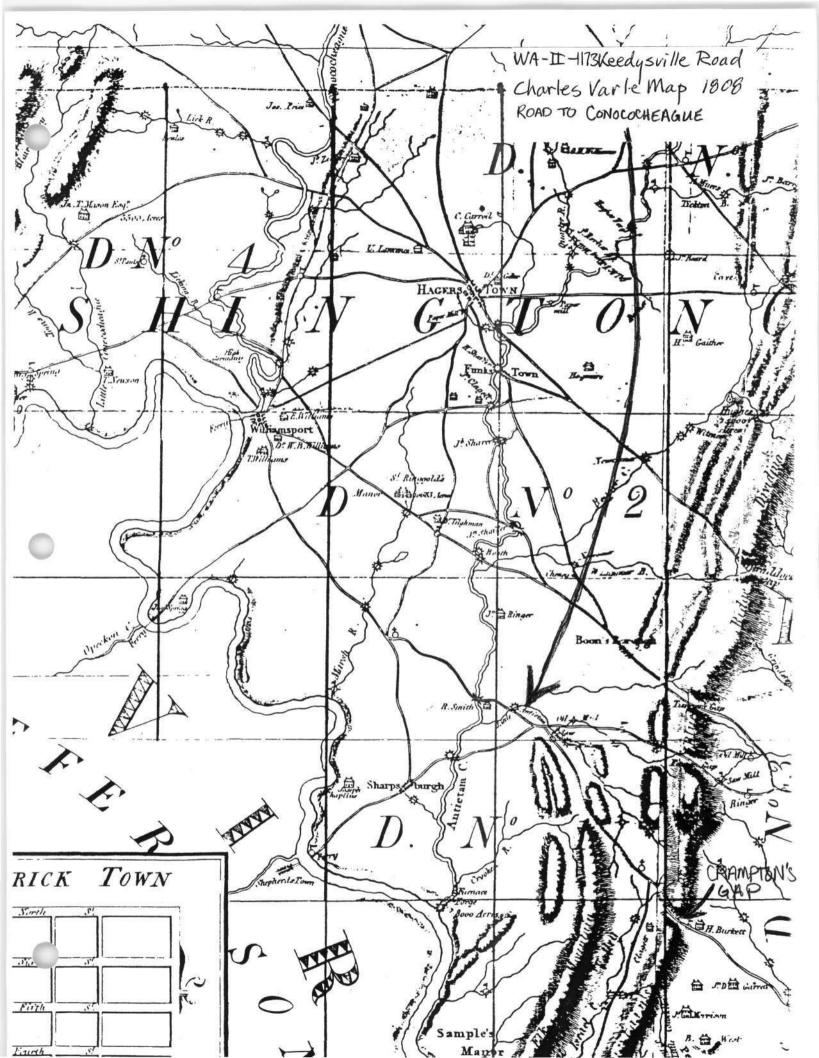
² Information on the Keedysville Road was derived from MIHP sites survey forms, reference numbers cited within this text, Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD.

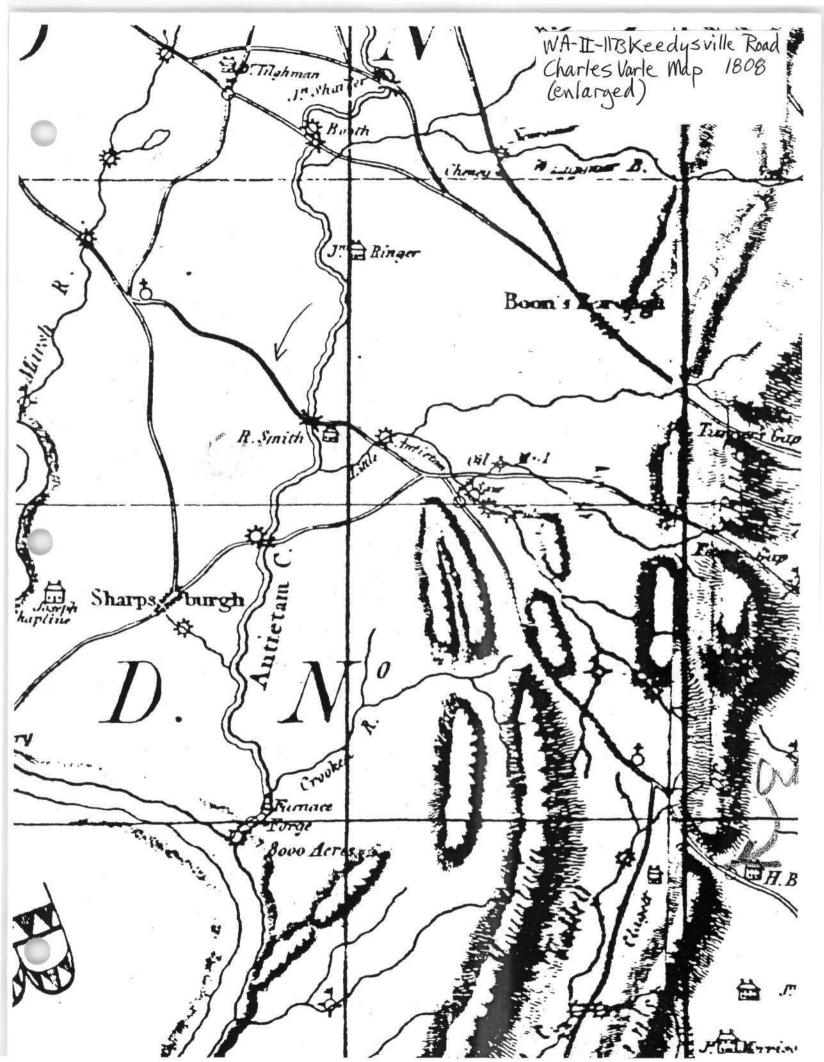
³ Washington Co. Deed Book IN 3, page 73, as cited in MIHP #WA-II-120, "Hitt's Mill, Valley Mills," 1976.

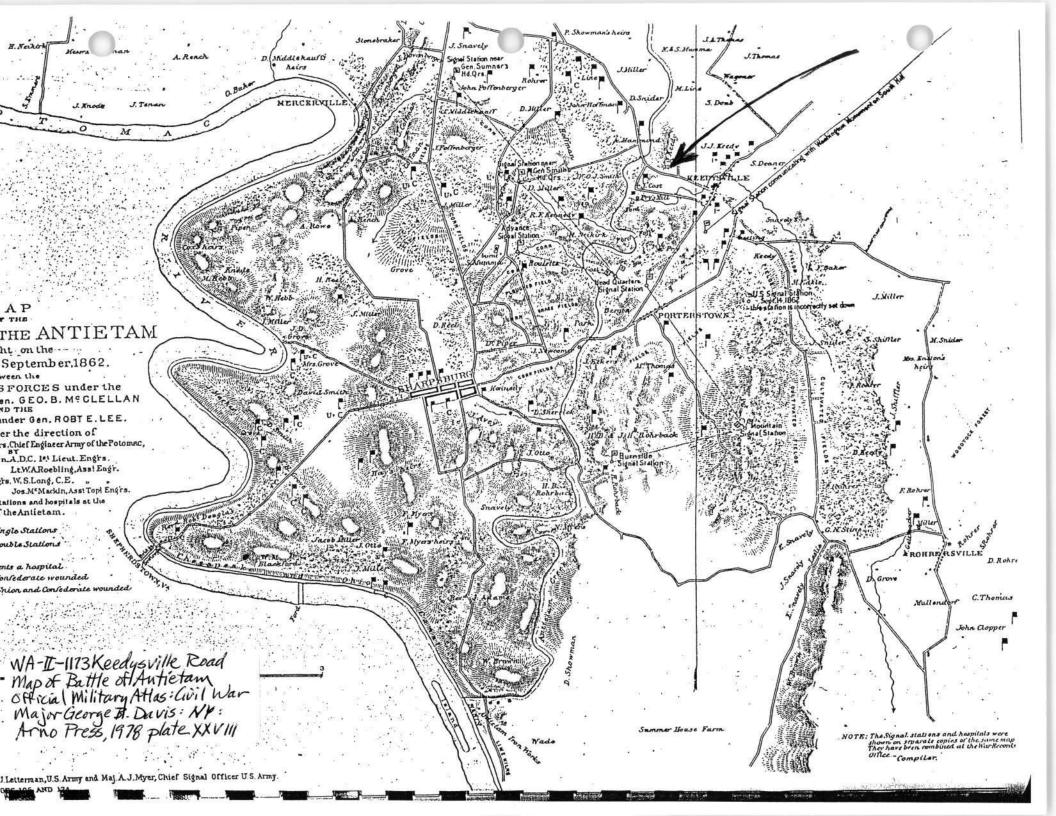
⁴ John W. Schildt, <u>Drums Along the Antietam</u>, (Parsons, WV,:McClain Printing Co., 1971), p.102-106.

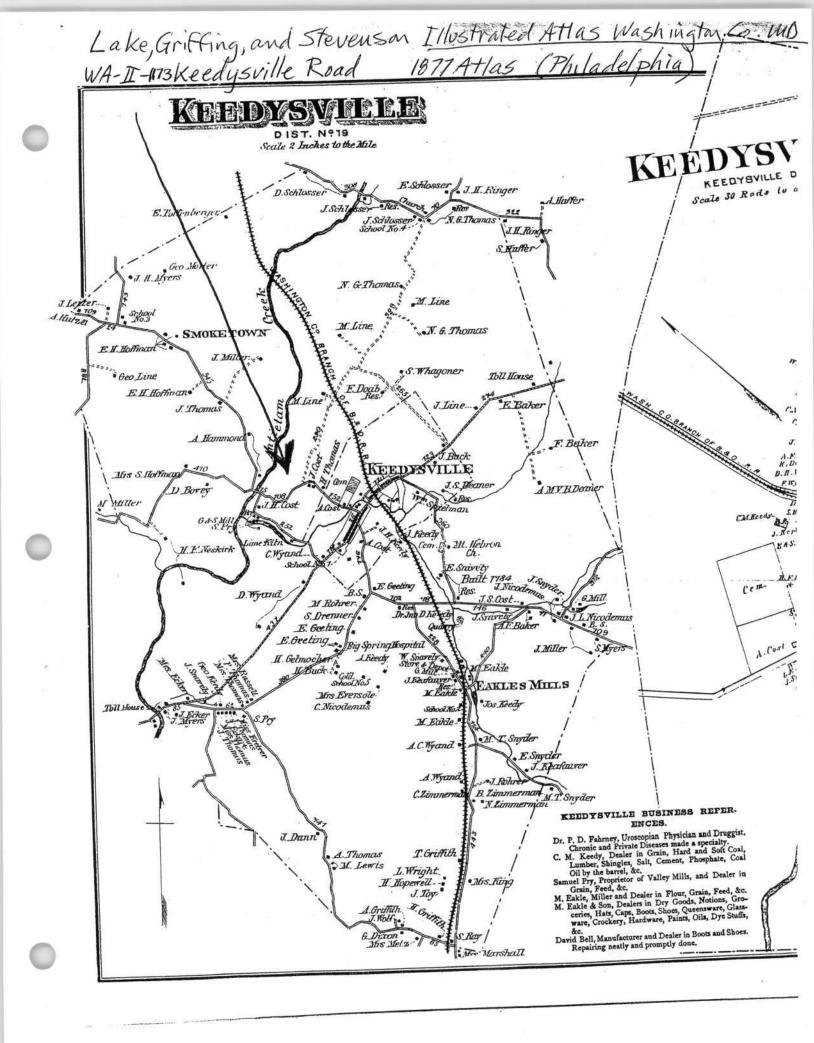
¹ Modern segments of this historic road in Washington County include Gapland Road across Crampton's Gap, Mt. Briar Road passing Eakle's or Furry's Mill, and Dog Street Road historically passing Hess's Mill in Keedysville.



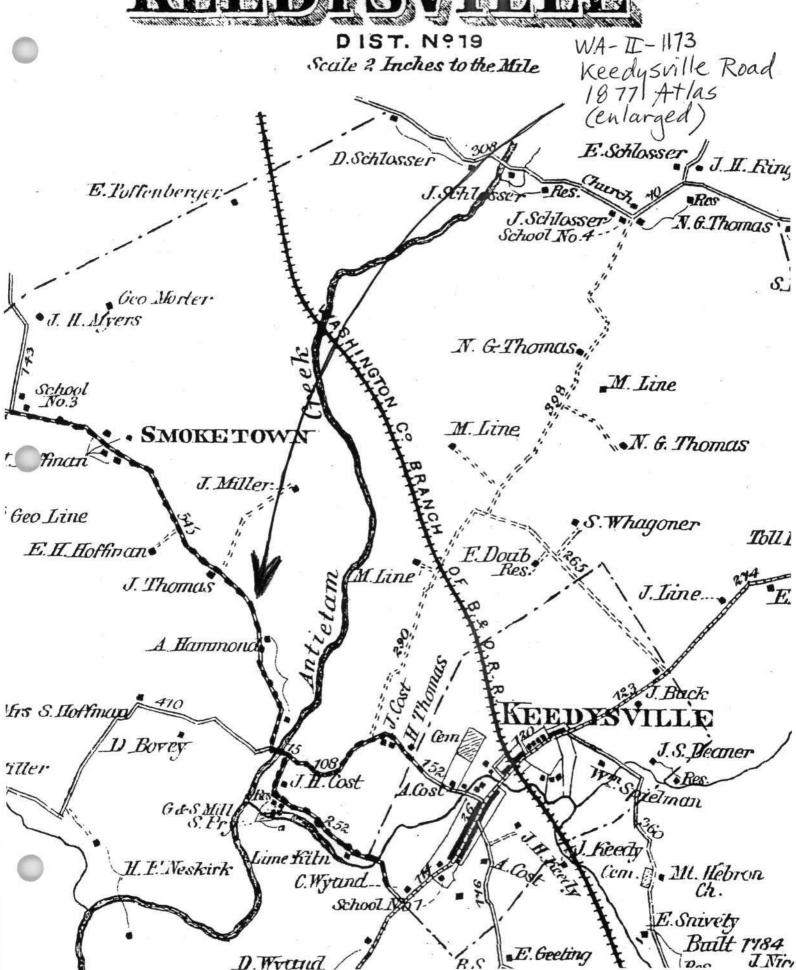


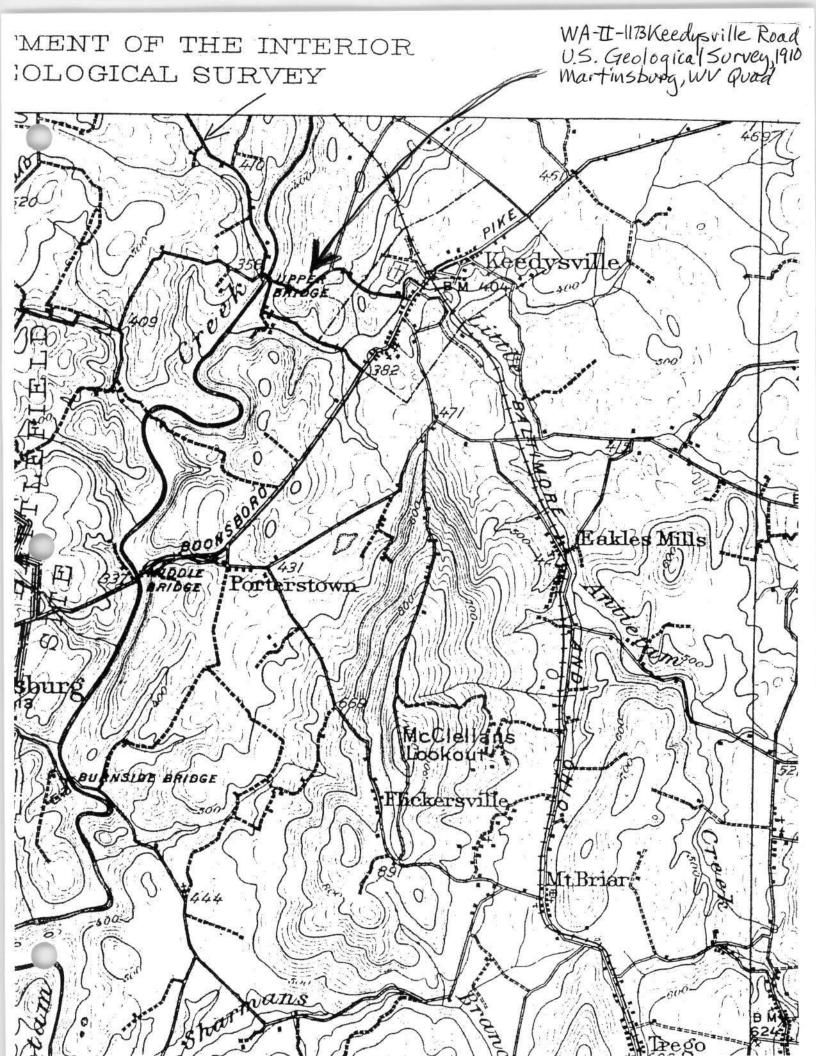


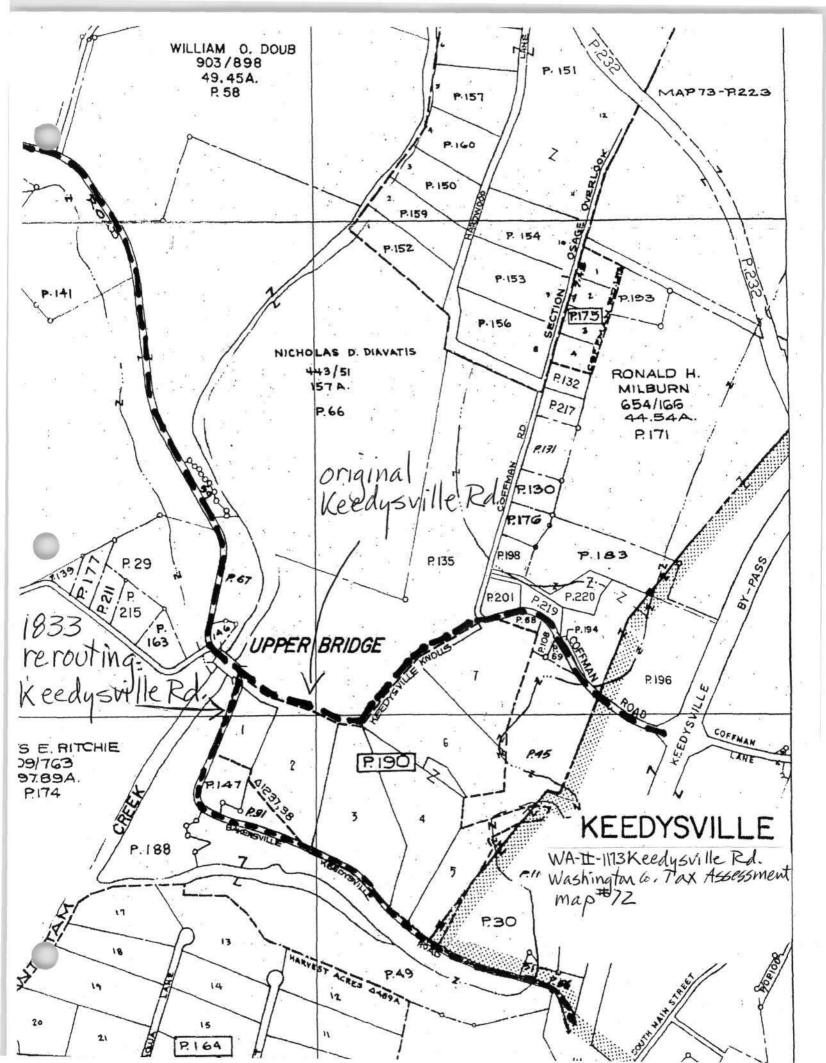


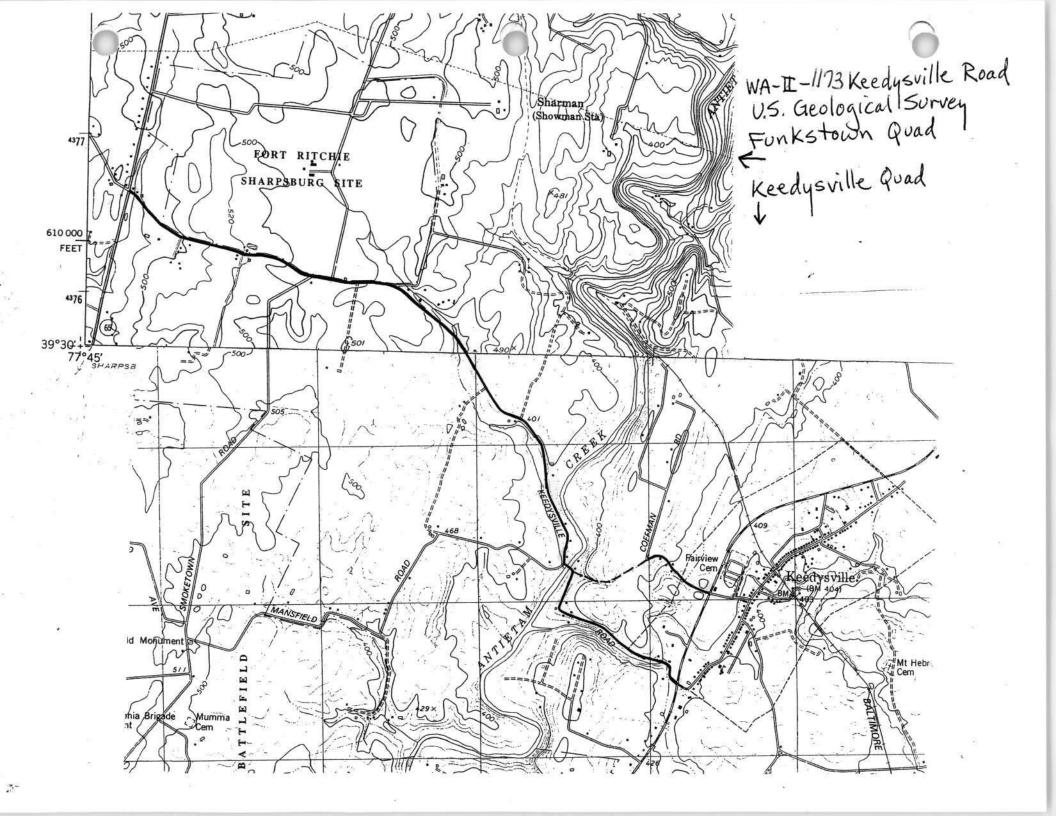


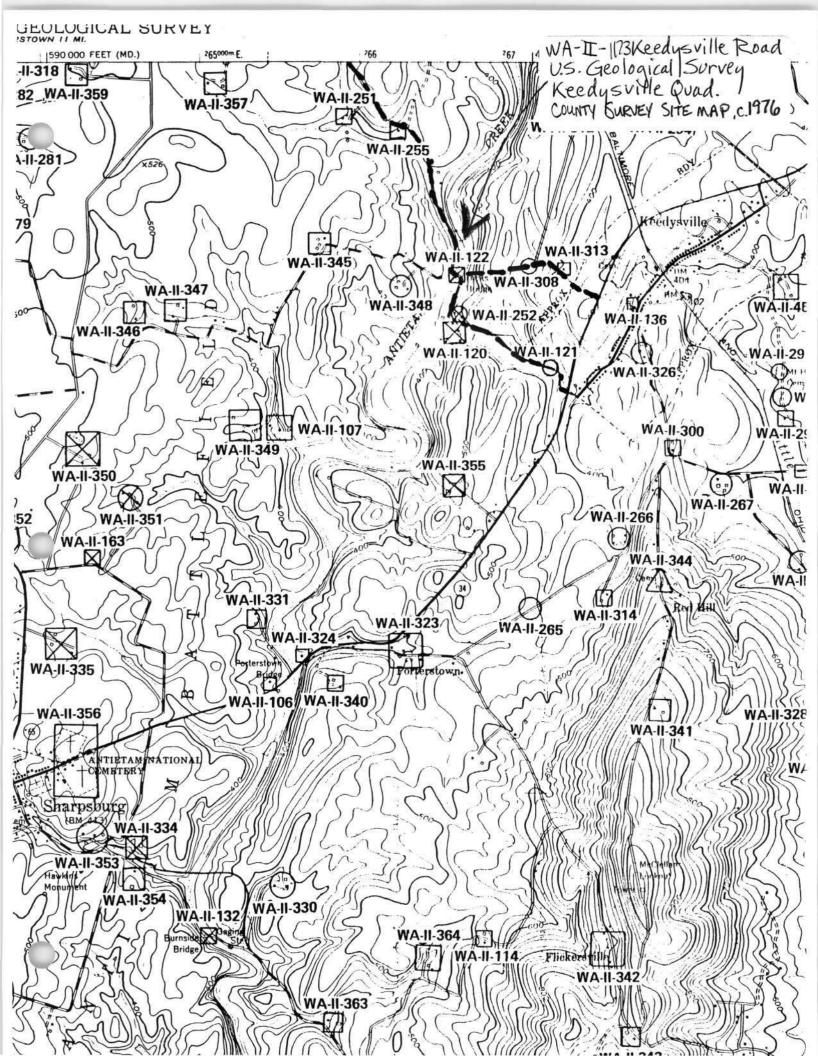
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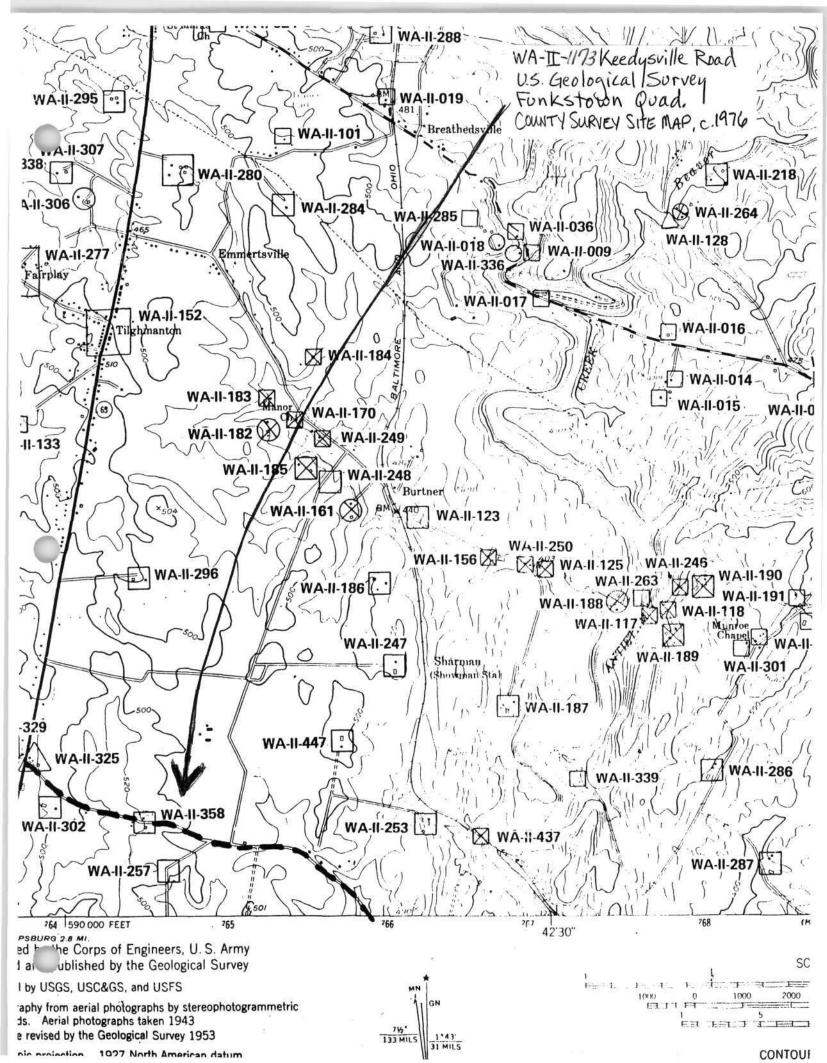














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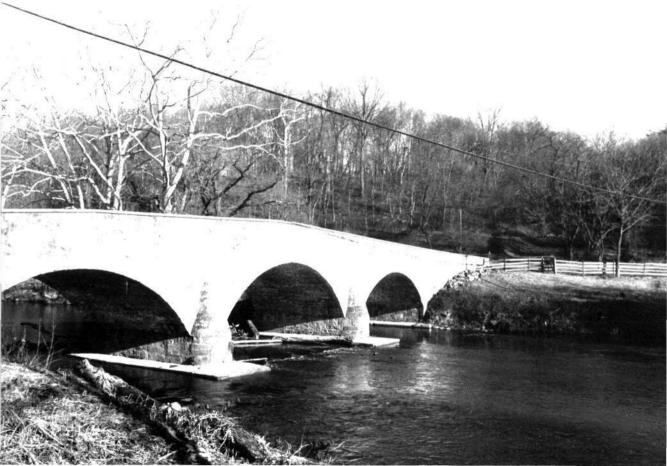
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